

See u.o.i.4AWOL

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## Film of GI Deserter in Sweden

# Significance Goes AWOL

By Jeanne Miller

"AWOL," which opened yesterday at the Larkin, is a banal, disjointed account of the misadventures of an American GI deserter who seeks refuge in Sweden.

Russ Thacker plays the youth in a wooden, one-note style that never establishes his motivation for having made such an important and irrevocable decision.

Thacker is entirely apolitical. His reason for deserting is ostensibly his reluctance to kill or to be killed, but his behavior when he first arrives in Stockholm more nearly suggests a holiday lark.

His first acquaintance is a jovial purveyor of pornography who suggests he apply for work as an actor in dirty movies. But the youth's ineptness so angers the film's director that he is soon fired.

Despite an abundance of amorous Scandinavian girls, Thacker finds it difficult to make friends until he meets two veteran deserters who send him to a left-wing Swedish student movement.

There he meets Isabella Kaliff, a beautiful young militant who shares her pad with him while trying to radicalize his fuzzy thinking.



**RUSS THACKER** tries to pull Isabella Kaliff away from a violent demonstration.

In order to solidify his position with his revolutionary mistress, Thacker participates in peace marches and protests, though he has no interest in the philosophy of the group.

Finally, Thacker becomes a victim, caught between his radical benefactors and a vi-

cious right-wing group who unaccountably worship President Nixon and carry his photographs, along with clubs and guns, to rallies where they beat in students' heads.

The student demonstrations are somewhat plausible. But the hordes of young

"AWOL," produced by Arne Brandhild and Herb Freed; directed by Freed; written by Richard Z. Chenoff and Freed. With Russ Thacker, Isabella Kaliff, Glynn Turman, Lenny Baker, Dutch Miller, Stefan Ekman. At the Larkin. Restricted audiences.

blond Swedish fascists creating bloody carnage in support of America's policy in Vietnam make no sense whatsoever.

Director Herb Freed, who co-produced and co-authored the sophomoric script, fails to achieve a point of view. Sometimes he opts for satire, like the character of a CIA agent who tries to woo Thacker back to the States with Marlboro cigarettes and American candy bars. But the humor misfires and becomes total burlesque.

The film has nothing very original or profound to say. It makes the irrefutable point that violence from the left is as destructive as violence from the right.

But the simplistic quality of the presentation nullifies its small quotient of significant content.